



The United States Army Field Band



MI ALMA LATINA **HIGH SCHOOL CHORUS: NEW MUSICAL LANGUAGES**

OBJECTIVES:

- Students will sight-read a piece of music with at least 75% accuracy.
- Students will analyze an unfamiliar piece of music.
- Students will participate in discussing performance aspects of a piece of music.

MATERIALS:

- *Mi Alma Latina*, track 13 (*Alma Llanera*) and liner notes
- *Alma Llanera* music (www.earthsongschoralmusic.com)
- Pencils

PROCEDURES:

1. Incorporate the following into the standard vocal warm-up, without the sheet music:
 - a. Rhythmic (on syllables or clapping): have women clap eighth notes while men clap quarter notes in $\frac{3}{4}$ time, starting slowly, and gradually speeding up. This is to introduce the joropo dance rhythm which combines $\frac{6}{8}$ time with $\frac{3}{4}$ time, which has a waltz feel.
 - b. Sung: 1) Following the director in $\frac{4}{4}$ time: 5-3-4-2-3-1-2-7-1 on MA ME MI MO MU, to increase mastery of descending third motif, found in m. 39 for tenors, and 45 for sopranos; 2) Have students sing in mm.33-36 on “doo,” ascending chromatically.
 - c. Rhythmic and Sung: Have women clap eighth notes while men sing mm. 1-4, looping as many times as necessary to get the right syncopation.
2. Distribute “Alma Llanera” to choir; sight-read as normally done, whether on “doo,” on solfeggio syllables, or on words. Set aside articulation and dynamics at this point. Sing until students are familiar with their parts and accompany as needed; this step may need to be spread across more than one rehearsal.
3. Play track 13. Have students listen for phrasing and articulation. Discuss how their reading differs from the recording. What aspects of the recording can the choir incorporate into their own performance?
4. Review the Spanish text and speak out loud. Have a skilled student volunteer speak the text to the class in “call and response” method, phrase by phrase. If students know IPA, have them mark especially difficult pronunciations with correct symbols as a reminder.
5. Review student phrasing and articulation suggestions as a group, marking them with pencils into the music. Perform “Alma Llanera” with student markings, without piano assistance. Allow a few minutes for choir members to evaluate their performance. If it is possible, record the performance for greater objectivity during the discussion.
6. Incorporate today’s lesson into further work on learning Latino music selected by choir director

EXPLORATION:

1. Team with Spanish teacher on the text, as is it difficult to sing the text quickly.
2. Team with guitar teachers to see and hear the modern version of the Venezuelan cuatro (a four-string folk guitar). Also have guitar class study piece for possible performance collaboration.

3. Choose a zarzuela selection to play for the class. What are some of the differences between zarzuela and modern Latin music? What are some of the difference between zarzuela and the Western operatic tradition?
4. Coordinate with history or world studies unit. Students could study the culture of Venezuela, and the history of this song, which is considered a second or unofficial national anthem

ASSESSMENT:

- Did the students sight-read a piece of music with at least 75% accuracy?
- Did the students analyze an unfamiliar piece of music?
- Did the students participate in discussing performance aspects of a piece of music?

NATIONAL STANDARDS:*

1. Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
 - 1b. Students sing music written in four parts, with and without accompaniment.
5. Reading and notating music.
 - 5a. Students demonstrate the ability to read an instrumental or vocal score of up to four staves by describing how the elements of music are used.
6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.
 - 6c. Students identify and explain compositional devices and techniques used to provide unity and variety, and tension and release, in a musical work, and give examples of other works that make similar uses of these devices and techniques.
7. Evaluating music and music performances.
 - 7a. Students evolve specific criteria for making informed, critical evaluations of the quality and effectiveness of performances, compositions, arrangements, and improvisations, and apply the criteria in their personal participation in music.
 - 7b. Students evaluate a performance, composition, arrangement, or improvisation by comparing it to similar or exemplary models.
 - 7c. Students evaluate a given musical work in terms of its aesthetic qualities and explain the musical means it uses to evoke feelings and emotions.

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